

God's Hidden Ones

If we were to tell you where to find them, they would be no longer hidden. Wonderful are the ways of the Lord, who sets up his throne in unexpected places, and builds his temples where we look not for them. Travelers in the wilderness are sometimes surprised to find a well known flower blooming in the midst of wide and wild isolation. How did it get there? A tiny seed floated upon a friendly wind, many miles, many leagues, and found at last a lodgment in the wilderness to bud and bloom unseen by any but the Eye that seeth the hidden things. Hath not the Holy Spirit been likened to the winds that blow as they list, and bear upon their bosom the germs of multitudinous life? Thus have these divine winds of God's Spirit borne into hidden homes and hidden lives the seeds of the Gospel of everlasting life, to blossom there in humility and beauty, and become God's hidden ones, and God's little ones, safely sheltered beneath the everlasting wings.

Give Me Thy Heart

Thus God speaks to each of us. We are his in a sense, yet he asks us to become his by giving him that which makes us what we are. God does not compel us to serve him. His greatest gift to man is the freedom of the will. With this gift he has never interfered. Therefore he says *give me thy heart*. And why the heart? Because the heart is the whole of man. Elsewhere we are taught that the heart is to be kept with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. What the heart is as a physical organ in the body, that also is the heart as the seat of the affections and emotions to the inner life of man. And this God asks us to give, generously and wholly to him.

No deed of ours is admirable that is done under any other restraint than that of love. The highest and noblest apology that the minister of Jesus Christ can give for his efforts toward the soul's welfare of others is "The love of Christ constraineth us." God's love, not his wisdom, not his power endears him to us. The attractive power of Jesus Christ was his great heart of love. All men and women who have had power over others in bringing them to God have been men and women "after God's own heart."

Every really beautiful life is moving freely of its own will toward some glorious end. Low aim, not failure in reaching the end, is a crime. The end aimed at gives beauty and moral value to every act. No soldier will ever live in song or in the hearts of his countrymen who fights for a shilling a day instead of for the flag. The Christian life that comes up to the Bible ideal is the life *given wholly* to God, not one that is bought by promises or forced by fear.

The individual that would enter into the blessed union with God thru Jesus Christ, can not enter into any contract by which certain reservations are made and certain rights of the individual withheld. Here is found the reason why the way of holiness is called "The narrow way." The contract that results from the union of Christ and the individual is not like the modern marriage contract that requires at the least two lawyers to execute the settlement before the vows are made. And yet despite the plain teaching of scrip-

ture there are individuals that wish to become Christians "provided" it does not forbid this, exclude that, or shut out something else, just as the ardent lover is not too ardent nowadays but reserves his rights to the "club" before assuming the responsibilities of the wedded life. Too many individuals calculate too precisely and painfully what it may cost to become a Christian and in most instances become Christians with reservations in the world's favor. The lover that calculates too exactly the cost of the wedding ring is not likely to make the best benedict. In all real love there must be a certain abandonment and courage.

God thru Jesus Christ demands our all. Nothing less will satisfy him, neither will it result in a satisfactory experience to ourselves. The only happy life in God is the fully surrendered life. God is not selfish in asking for the heart. He that made the heart knows better than we what only will satisfy it. The heart has an affinity for God and naught else but God will satisfy it. The soul's rest is found only in God. This is what is implied in the scripture "Give me thy heart." The world must needs learn this scripture. The world is filled with restlessness and despair because men are seeking for peace and hope apart from God. God is a God of love, of joy, of peace, of rest, of hope. These things the heart can feed upon, and it finds them only as it finds God.

But the heart must be given entirely and unconditionally to Him. There is unrest and despair in the church as well as out. The church needs to learn once for all that the Christian life is very far from being a joint-stock company with *limited* liabilities as to its stockholders. Christianity must become everything or nothing with us. Christians are not like the militia whose duties are bounded by state lines, but like the regulars whose duty is wherever the flag is. This it is that makes the relationship between Jesus and the individual so sacred. The Christian life that consists in paying pew rent and an occasional gift to the spreading of the gospel brings little of sweetness with it, but if one would really know what the Christian life means let him give his whole heart to God and his soul will at once blossom into service and song.

The Scolding Preacher

Now and then we hear of a preacher scolding from the pulpit because the people do not turn out to church, and we have wondered why such preachers do not seem to see the futility of such scolding. In the first place it does not apply to those who are present, who despite discouraging conditions have presented themselves in the sanctuary, and are entitled to something better than a dose of scolding. Those to whom it applies are not present to hear it, but doubtless they hear of it, and the fact that they have been criticised behind their backs is not calculated to have a salutary effect upon their minds. It is not at all likely to reform their conduct. It is quite true that people stay away from church for a multitude of trifling reasons which they do not allow to interfere either with their business or pleasure, but it is equally true that not many of them are going to be mended by a process of scolding. Let the preacher try another method. Let him make the service so attractive that people